



Iron

"Keep up your strength!"

Why do we need iron ?

- ◆ helps carry oxygen to the cells
- ◆ Prevents *iron-deficiency anemia*, which can make you feel tired, short of breath, pale and weak.

How much iron do we need?

The Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) for iron is 10mg for most healthy adult males and 15mg for healthy females. People who are at risk of low iron intake include:

- ◆ Infants
- ◆ Adolescents
- ◆ Menstruating women
- ◆ Pregnant women

What are the best sources of iron?

Animal sources of iron are usually better absorbed than plant sources of iron. For example, iron in red meat is better absorbed than iron from cooked dried beans. You can increase your body's ability to absorb iron by including some vitamin C foods with your iron-containing foods at the same meal. For example, eating spaghetti sauce (lots of vitamin C -rich tomatoes) with meat in it (good source of iron) is a good way to up your iron intake. Another way to increase your iron intake is to choose whole grains and *enriched* or *fortified* grains and cereals. The following table provides the iron content in some common foods.

Most healthy adults need about 10-15mg iron/day	
1 cup Total cereal (fortified with iron)	18.0 mg
1 cup Cheerios	4.5 mg
3.5 ounces tenderloin steak	3.4 mg
1 broiled hamburger (about 3.5 oz. cooked)	2.1 mg
2/3 cup raisins	1.8 mg
3.5 ounces pork loin	1.0 mg
1 slice enriched wheat bread	1.0 mg

What about iron supplements?

A physician may prescribe iron supplements if he/she finds that you are *iron-deficient*. Because iron can be harmful in high doses, you should not take iron supplements without a physician's approval first. You can take a multi-vitamin with iron as long as it provides *no more than* 100% of the RDA for iron. Ask your doctor and check the label!

Tips for increasing your iron intake:

- ◆ Choose foods high in iron
- ◆ Choose whole grains and enriched or fortified cereals and grains
- ◆ Eat foods high in vitamin C
- ◆ Cook in iron pans (the iron actually does get absorbed into the food)

Pump up your iron intake with this recipe!

David's Three Alarm Chili*

Servings: 8

Cooking time: 1 1/2 hrs

<i>Amount</i>	<i>Measure</i>	<i>Ingredient</i>
1	lb.	lean ground beef
3	15 oz cans	red or pink kidney beans, drained
2	large	onions, chopped
3	large	green bell peppers, chopped
1	medium	garlic clove, minced
2	28 oz cans	crushed tomatoes
3	tbsp.	chili powder
1	tbsp.	hot sauce

Procedure:

1. Cook ground beef in a large saucepan until well done. Drain fat.
2. Add beans, onions, peppers, and garlic to meat.
3. Add tomatoes, chili powder, and hot sauce to saucepan.
4. Simmer for 1 1/2 hours on medium low heat.

Nutrient Analysis per serving: Calories 351, Carbohydrates 50g, Protein 24g, Fat 8g, Sat fat 3g, **Iron 6.5mg**, Vitamin C 67mg, Vitamin A 2695 IU, Calcium 135mg, Fiber 17g
Food Guide Pyramid: 5 1/2 servings vegetable group, 1 serving meat group

**Recipe submitted by David Nettleton, student, Bunnell High School, Stratford CT*

